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International Geological Congress, Seventh Session, St. Petersburg, 1897

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CORRESPONDENCE.INTERNATIONAL GEOLOGICAL CONGRESS,
SEVENTH SESSION, ST. PETERSBURG, 1897.

REPORT OF DR. JOSEPH W. RICHARDS, Delegate of the Institute.

To the President and Members of the Franklin Institute:

Your delegate to the Seventh International Geological Congress, assembled in St. Petersburg at the invitation of the Tsar, respectfully submits the following report:

The Congress was in session from August 29th to September 4th.

Previously to its opening, a number of the delegates participated in an excursion of fourteen days in Esthonia, under the direction of Fr. Schmidt; others in a trip of seven days into Finland, under the direction of I. Sederholm and W. Ramsay; while others, to the number of 120, embraced the opportunity offered to visit the Ural Mountains, and enjoyed an expedition of twenty-nine days in eastern Russia, from Moscow to Ekaterinsbourg and Perm. The members who participated in these expeditions were delighted with the lavish hospitality everywhere showered upon them, and will carry to their homes, in all quarters of the world, lasting remembrances of Russia's friendliness to the representatives of geological science.

It may here be remarked that, after the closing of the Congress, there is organized a trip of thirty days through Southern Russia and the Caucasus (*via* Moscow, Nijni, the Volga, Astrakhan, the Caspian Sea, Petrovsk, Vladi-Kavkaz, Tiflis, Baku, Batoum, Kertch, Sevastopol to Odessa), which will be partici-

pated in by nearly 300 geologists, and promises to be an incident of a lifetime.

On Saturday evening, August 28th, the Committee of Organization gave a reception to the members of the Congress in the rooms of the German Club, where, to the accompaniment of military music, in the comfortable rooms and spacious garden of the club, the assembled geologists renewed old, and laid the foundations of new, friendships. The strenuous efforts of the Committee of Organization to make the days of the Congress pass as pleasantly as possible, may be seen when it is noted that the entire club building, with all its accessories, was rented for the week of the Congress and placed at the disposal of the delegates as a rendezvous.

The formal opening of the Congress took place at 1 o'clock on the afternoon of August 29th, in the large hall of the Zoölogical Museum of the Academy of Sciences, which was beautifully decorated. The scene was a brilliant one, the members and officers being in full dress or uniform, with honors and badges of distinction, the whole scene centering about Their Highnesses the Grand Duke Constantine Constantinovitch and the Princess d'Oldenbourg, who graced the occasion by their presence. The Grand Duke, Honorary President of the Congress, greeted the assembly as follows:*

"In the name of His Majesty, the Emperor, our August Protector, I welcome the brilliant assembly of geologists united here, and I am happy to greet, in you, the representatives of the civilized countries of the entire world.

"It was twenty years ago, on the other side of the ocean, at Philadelphia, that there germinated for the first time the idea of the necessity of concordance in the works of geologists of different parts of the world, and it was decided that the first International Geological Congress would be held in Paris. Even then were plainly evident the series of questions which needed to be solved by the united work of the geologists of all countries. Besides these questions of the first importance, the sessions which have since been held in Bologna, Berlin, London, Washington and Zürich have brought forth a whole series

*The proceedings of the Congress were all held in the French language.

of new questions, of a character equally international, and the solution of several of these has already led to startling results in the whole of contemporary geological literature.

"Since the Congress of London, several of the members had expressed the desire to see the geologists meet in Russia. His Majesty, the Emperor Alexander III, received this wish kindly, and deigned to invite the Congress, then assembled at Washington, to hold its Seventh Session at St. Petersburg. From that time, work has been going on actively to receive in proper manner the members of the Congress. To afford to our guests the possibility of taking note, on the spot, of the geological peculiarities of our country, it was decided from the first that there would be made several long excursions across Russia. This project, however, could not have been realized without the generous assistance of His Majesty, the Emperor Nicholas II. Our gracious Sovereign immediately accorded very large assistance in contributing to the success of these excursions.

"At the present time, many among you, sirs, have already been able to realize part of the projected excursions. A goodly number among you have already twice traversed European Russia and have visited the Asiatic slope of the Urals, that cradle of our mineral industry. You have had, it is true, many difficulties to vanquish in this tour, but I am pleased to believe, sirs, that the privations which you have had to endure have been compensated for by the new and interesting things which you have seen on your journey.

"Others among you have visited Finland, in excursions full of scientific interest, thanks to the enlightened co-operation of our colleagues, the geologists of Finland.

"A certain number, finally, have been able to traverse the Baltic provinces, the coast of Russia, which is, without doubt, the best studied in its geological relations.

"In all your excursions, you have been able to observe the cordial reception which is given in Russia to the representatives of science.

"Now that you have collected new material for your studies, and have seen with your own eyes that which most of

you knew only from the books, you are about to commence the work which is to occupy your attention in St. Petersburg.

"Permit me, sirs, to express the wish that the flourishing tree of geological science, which has already borne such good fruit in the preceding sessions, will not bear in less abundance in the Congress of St. Petersburg, and that our present reunion may give a report of a scientific interest no less satisfactory than those which have been published after each of the previous six sessions.

"I declare the Seventh Session of the International Geologic Congress opened."

After the subsidence of the applause which followed this happy address, Madame, The Princess d'Oldenbourg, President of the Imperial Mineralogical Society, welcomed the Congress in the name of the Society, which was founded under Imperial protection in 1817.

The Grand Duke Alexandre Mikhaïlovitch telegraphed a welcome in the name of the Imperial Society of Naturalists, of which he is President.

The Russian Minister of Agriculture then took the floor, and in a very agreeable manner greeted the assembly, gave a *résumé* of the labors of Russian geologists, noted the intense activity at present shown in all parts of the Empire, especially in Siberia, and declared that: "It is at this moment of ever-increasing development, of even feverish activity, in the domain of geologic science, that we salute as our guests the most eminent geologists of the entire world. This reunion is an event of capital importance, which will leave for all time its trace in the scientific history of our country."

The business of the assembly was then begun. M. Renevier, President of the last session of the Congress, took the floor and announced the recommendations which the Council of the Congress had adopted. The bureau named included, as "Former Honorary President," James Hall, of the United States; as President, Karpinsky, of Russia; as Secretary, Tschernyschew, of Russia; and as Vice-Presidents, thirty distinguished geologists from different countries, among whom were: Marsh, Emerson, Frazer and Emmons from the United

States. The assembly ratifying the recommendations of the Council, M. Renevier resigned the Presidency to M. Karpinsky. The latter took the floor and addressed the Congress at some length. Part of the address was as follows:

"Before beginning our work, I deem it my first duty to render final homage to the memory of the members of former Congresses whom we have had the profound sorrow to lose since our last session. We regret deeply not to see amongst us the Honorary President of the London Congress, Huxley, nor its President, Prestwich; nor the President of the Berlin Congress, Beyrich, nor the illustrious Daubrée. * * * We see no longer amongst us, either, the celebrated Danish savant, Swendstrup, Posepny, the Marquis de Saporta, Bornemann, nor Antonio del Castillo, the founder of the Geological Bureau of Mexico.

"These were all more or less advanced in age, but our science has also lost men full of life and who gave us the brightest hopes. Such were Cope, one of the most illustrious savants of the New World; de Foulton, the worthy Austrian geologist; Leon du Pasquier and Marschal Hall. * * *

"We cannot cite here all the losses we have made; there are many others whom we could name. Let us rise, gentlemen, to honor their memory.

"Passing to the task imposed upon us by our reunion, I would recall to you that the Committee of Organization judges it of the first importance to take up in our session the vital question of the unification of the nomenclature, and that first of all the Congress ought to decide which of the two chronological classifications of sedimentary formations it wishes to preserve in the science, viz.:

"(1) The artificial classification, based solely on historical facts; or

"(2) The natural classification, which is based as much on general physico-geographic changes, common to all the world, as on the knowledge of fauna, and *not* on the accidental limits of diverse divisions called after the name of the country where they have been recognized for the first time.

"Finally, it is desirable that the Congress throw light on a

second question of principle, that of rules to be followed in the introduction of new terms in stratigraphic nomenclature. It is in the highest degree desirable that the Congress, which has already established rules for paleontologic nomenclature, should establish the conditions which authorize the application of new terms to new deposits.

"Another question, of no less absolute necessity, is petrographic nomenclature.

"The development of science ought to be entirely free, without being encumbered by superfluous rules. The remarkable progress made recently in all branches of geologic science has opened up a series of new horizons; these new fields require new terms, which are wanting in scientific language. But, as always happens in such cases, the new terms have multiplied too fast, and never has geology suffered from such a superabundance of new words. We are fast approaching a new Tower of Babel.

"These questions can only be decided by universal agreement among geologists, and no one doubts that the Congress ought to decide them. When nine-tenths or even one-half of the geologists are perfectly in accord upon the necessity of a rule to be followed in order to preserve clearness in scientific language, all the others should finally conform gradually to that rule.

"I cannot close, sirs, without saying that it is a very great pleasure for all us Russians to see assembled in our capital so many geologists of the entire world. That which pleases me, especially (I do not conceal it), is that on returning to your homes you will enlighten your countrymen concerning our country, so little known to most of them. The true geologic science is not confined to one's own country, and it is only the fraternal work of all the geologists of the world which can enlighten us on the structure and evolution of the earth, our great fatherland. This fraternal accord is one of the most beautiful aspects of scientific congresses in general, and in no case can the results be more beneficial than in the progress of the science to which our assembly is consecrated."

M. Karpinsky was succeeded by M. Tschernyschew, Secre-

tary of the Congress, who recapitulated briefly the history of the organization of this Congress. The opening exercises were then closed by the Grand Duke Constantine Constantinovitch.

On Tuesday, August 31st, the Congress visited the Tsar's palace, Peterhof, and was most royally received.

On Wednesday, September 1st, the members were tendered a reception in the Hôtel de Ville, by the Mayor of St. Petersburg and the town council.

On Thursday, September 2d, the Congress was the guest of the Senate of Finland, at the Cascade of Imatra.

The other days were occupied by a sitting of the Council at 9 A.M.; a general assembly for the discussion of general questions at 10.30 A.M., and a meeting for the reading and discussion of papers at 3 P.M. On September 5th, the Congress was formally closed at 1 o'clock P.M., at which sitting the usual votes of thanks were passed, and amid general felicitations, the Congress adjourned to meet next in Paris, in 1900.

The record of the business of the session will be found in detail in the reports sent herewith.

Respectfully submitted,

JOSEPH W. RICHARDS.

ST. PETERSBURG, SEPTEMBER 4, 1897.
